

Today we're going to continue with the series *God's Law of Tithing*. This is *Part 4*.

We have focused on the book of Hebrews concerning a change in the priesthood, and because of that change in the priesthood from the Levitical system to that of the priesthood, in essence, of Melchizedek, of which Christ is the High Priest, of what God has given to us as far as those called and baptized and then the growth process we begin there until we're born. We're a part of a Body. We are a part of the Body of Christ, we're part of the Church of God, we're exceedingly blessed, and we will always have, in that respect, a High Priest who is over us, whether it be in this time while we're in the Church of God or whether we're in Elohim. He's always going to be our High Priest and it's that particular order.

So, it functions a little bit differently when you talk about the Church and the structure of the Church, and there are things even about the Millennium we don't understand yet about how God is going to lead, guide, and direct and work with us during the Millennium. We have much to learn. But it's going to be exciting and inspiring, but again, we've addressed some of this.

I thought it would be good to go back to this matter about the order of Melchizedek when it first began to be revealed by God, and it was revealed fairly early on, if you will, if you look at Genesis 14. There's not very much, I should say, of anything written except some history, certain events that took place all the way up to this point in time of God working with Abram. It's really quite a unique process to go through here and see this lineage and the things that took place and how God began to introduce then those things that pertain to a relationship with Him.

That becomes an important factor here as we begin to look at this because this is one of the first things that God began to reveal as far as that which "puts teeth" into a relationship, that which strengthens a relationship, begins a process of creating a relationship. Because we can say we love different ones or we desire certain qualities or characteristics of a relationship with others, but especially when it comes to God, it becomes a little different, obviously, and so we see things here that God begins to give, to reveal, and it's a progressive revelation. It's all a part of this process.

So, we go back here then to **Genesis 14:13—Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew...** Backing up a little bit here, this is the area of Sodom, Gomorrah, that region of the world, and there were others that came in, that united together, different kings came in and conquered them and took away spoils and people and so forth, and livestock. This is the point where Abram is hearing about it.

It says, **Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew for he dwelt by the oak trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner. They were allies**

with Abram. So again here, this was a common thing in that time, just as it has been through history, people unite, they form alliances. Why? Well, because of others who want to come in and conquer them and take from them, and so forth. It's been that way through time and it's a part of what was happening here.

Now, when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, it says, **he armed his three hundred and eighteen experienced men who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.** So, a lot of translations here are really kind of murky. People don't grasp what was taking place in those time periods. Even as we've gone through here there are certain words here that I'm not even going to bother going into, and I've given a translation that's correct in the sense of what was taking place.

And so, these 318, as it's talking about here, experienced. Experienced at what? They were experienced in battle. They had different ones come up against them. They were prepared for, in other words, to get together an ability to go out and fight. It wasn't just individuals with pitchforks and so forth, or whatever it might be in taking care of herds and the like. These were people who were trained because they had to be prepared for a people, which was common those times, of coming in and stealing from them. Whether they be robbers and thieves and so forth, but also against armies or what you'd call armies at that time, of groups of people who would organize and come in and try to conquer someone and to rob from them. Rather than work for it themselves, they would try to go to some place that was wealthier or wealthy, and steal everything they had. Man hasn't changed much.

So again here, these, it says, were born in his own house, meaning that they were of those who worked for him. He was a very wealthy man, Abram was. God had blessed him incredibly, and this was just the beginning of his life in the sense of wealth and the like. To have that many people working for him, there were a lot more working for him. He had great possessions. But these are the individuals who were experienced in fighting and prepared for that kind of thing. So, those are the ones he took with him. Not all of his servants because there were different varying ages and so forth, but these he did.

It says, **He divided his forces against them...** So, it goes on and tells the story of what he did and how he did it. He took them with him and went in pursuit as far as Dan. If you look at a map and you see the regions here, it's quite extensive from where they were and the kind of ground that they covered.

It says, **He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.** That's a long way away. That's even farther for what they did because when they started this pursuit, started fighting them, then it led to pursuing them even farther. So again, this is quite a battle and quite a bit of ground that was covered.

So, he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

Then verse 17—Then the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (this is the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. So again, he is in that area that they had taken women, that they took all kinds of goods and animals and so forth with them. This was the way that they did things back at that time, they'd take the things that they wanted to take back to their country with them. And so, here one of those kings that was in that area that had been conquered, if you will, or fought against, and people and goods taken from him, he came out to meet Abram because they were thankful for what Abram had done in taking his people to go and fight against them in order to bring back the women and all the goods. He went out to thank him and this is that story.

So, the king went out to meet him and so forth, and it says, **Then, Melchizedek, King of Salem brought out bread and wine.** Now, it doesn't tell a lot here. It's incredible. It doesn't reveal how this happens, how Abram knew what he did. It just addresses a fact here. This is what took place. This is when it happened. Whether he knew him before, had met him before, it doesn't go into those things.

And He, the priest, it says here, **He, the priest...** It really is "was." **He, the priest...** King James, I'm sorry, says "was." It isn't saying that he was the High priest of God. It literally says, **He, the priest, God Most High.** The word "of" isn't even in there in that respect as far as the Hebrew writing and so forth is concerned here, but it's just making a statement, "He, the priest..." not "of." It's hard to not even say it that way, "God Most High," basically, with a comma in there, in other words.

He manifested Himself as a priest, and we don't understand this, but this is what He did. His first relationship, in that sense, in a personal way, by being able to meet with someone, to talk with someone like this, that had taken place. This is an incredible event as far as the Bible is concerned, the beginning process here of what had happened after the flood (long after now), and Abram is at this particular point in time whether it was 360, 370 years after the flood, wherever it was at this moment.

So, it says about this Melchizedek, King of Salem, that He brought out bread and wine, **Then He blessed him and said...** Now, this is about God. He knew this was about God. How much he knew, we don't know, but he knew this was a matter of God speaking to him or a representative of God speaking to him. How much is there, we don't know because it just doesn't say.

It says, **Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.** So, he's talking about God. "Blessed be Abraham, from" in essence, "God Most High, Possessor," God Almighty, "of heaven and earth." **And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.** So, from all indications of the conversation he sees this as someone who is a representative of God. Not an angel, something different. Not an angelic being but of an individual who was able to pass along blessings, said, "You're blessed, Abraham," and to speak

of that and God who is giving those blessings to him. It says here, “And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.”

He’s making it clear here to Abram that God is the one who gave you this victory. He’d already begun a small slight relationship, if you will, with God. He was obedient to God when God told him to go from his land to another. It says, he went. He just obeyed God. So, there is that period of time in there he has a beginning of a relationship with God. It doesn’t go into it in detail but enough here that we can grasp that Abraham made choices he wanted a relationship with God. He wanted to please God Almighty. He had already experienced and recognized that, blessings from God, everything that he possessed. The things that took place in the story before his, that if you go back and read those it reveals that God is blessing Abram mightily in his life. Abraham’s heart and mind is such that he recognizes that. The reality is mankind doesn’t generally recognize that at all. They don’t care. They don’t recognize. But he wanted that relationship. God had already communicated with him in that relationship, and he was obedient to what he heard from God.

It says here that “God is the one who delivered the enemies into your hand.” Just making it clear. Because what human beings oftentimes do is they take the credit to themselves: “Look what we’ve done. Look what our army has done. Look what our people have done.” That’s what this country has always done. That’s what most people have always done; people with whom God has blessed in time, they don’t recognize God, as a whole. Some do to a point, but it’s to a point. But still, the tendency is to take credit to oneself, “Look at what we have done.” “Look at what the victory we have.” God isn’t always in the picture, obviously.

Then he, Abraham, in other words, gave him a tithe of all. So, there is something here that Abraham already knew or recognized, if you will. But this is the first place in scripture that it’s addressed, that to have a relationship with God, he wanted to give back to God, something that he understood in his mind that was required or needed, if you will, as far as understanding a relationship or choosing a relationship with God.

Something about the tithe that Abraham grasped and comprehended and wanted to honor God, so this is a part of something delivered here, that he wanted a relationship with God. It wasn’t 20%. It wasn’t 25%. It wasn’t 50%. It was 10% of all there that was brought back, that was his, in other words. Let’s go on with the story.

Now, the king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the people, in other words, that Abram rescued, **and take the goods for yourself.** So, in other words, we don’t want all the goods that you have received back, that you captured and have brought back with you that belonged to us, all the people and so forth that you have brought back. “We’re just thankful to have all the people.” This was the king’s response and he said, “Take everything else. We don’t want that. We’re just so thankful to have the people back, and, in essence, we want you to have the rest because of what you’ve done.” That thankfulness, that gratitude was of that measure.

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have raised my hand to the Eternal, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth... So, it's good to really grasp something that's put so succinctly, because we don't have a lot of the story. But what we do have God wants us to grasp and understand the importance of what is taking place and the importance of what he's saying here. He's addressing this in a very unique and powerful way.

He says, "I raised my hand to the Eternal God," bringing God back into the picture here, "Possessor of heaven and earth." He'd been told that from Melchizedek and he's just reiterating this then to the king, that He is the God of everything, the Possessor of heaven and earth, **and I have declared to my God,** is basically what he's saying, **that I will take nothing.** In other words, the motive to rescue was pure and right and it was to help, and it was to give, not to get something in return. So, that was his heart, that was his mind. He's making this very clear here because this has to do with his relationship with God and what he grasped and understood to that point.

It says, **from a thread to a sandal strap.** Pretty small. Nothing, no matter how small. **...and that I will not take anything that is yours, unless you should say, I have made Abram rich.** So, why is he saying that? Because he's making it clear God has given me everything that I have. You have not done this. And so, "I'm not taking anything unless you should begin to say," in essence, "as my wealth continues to grow, as I'm able to continue to do the things that I do, that you had a hand in this."

He's making clear this is from God. So, what an incredible heart. All the way through here I think about sermons we've gone through and talked about David and that heart. Here is an incredible heart. And people, when they begin to be converted, our minds, our hearts begin to change. Sometimes that's a long process as God works with us, molds and fashions us, as we turn more and more to God and we become more appreciative of that relationship, that relationship that grows and becomes more real. It's a powerful thing because it's combined with God's holy spirit that works with us, that makes it more alive, if you will.

So he says, "...I have made Abram rich," "unless you should say that" **...except only what the young men have eaten.** So, in other words, they have already eaten of certain things so that, because of what they did, **and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.** So, in other words, I'm not taking any, but these other individuals that fought in the manner that they did and accomplished what they did and had different ones that were with them.

Because they had an order of things just like, if you would, someone were in a group, they didn't just do it on their own. They were organized. That's what an army has to be. So, these individuals and the size they were had to have that order. These individuals are mentioned. And so, it wasn't just them, it was the rest of them with them, but they're the ones that are acknowledged because they're the primary ones who headed the different groups.

He's saying here, "Let them take their portion that is right for them, but nothing for me." So, in other words, those particular servants were able to be blessed from that portion of what they did and accomplished but Abraham's motive was totally a matter of a relationship with God and doing what was right for those in his area of that part of the world at that time. Then it goes on in Genesis 15. It continues with the story.

So again here, this thing about this tithe. The first place that it's interjected like this as far as showing here the importance of something in Abraham's mind that he felt not only that he wanted to do, but that he should do. So, where did he get that? Well, he got it from God.

It's sometimes difficult but sometimes wise as well, to understand that there are certain things that can be interjected in some of this. He also did this of what he had and what he received back, and it's showing here just a practice of his life, of how he thought, of what he was like. And so, it wasn't of the other things.

That's where the story becomes a little confusing when you read it by other translations, because it's like he had all these things of all these others, like the king of Sodom and different ones, and that he tithed on all that. That's not what this is about. This is about Abraham and what he did and by all recollection or by all practical application of the story here, of context, this was his practice, of everything that he had. But it makes it sound as though, "He delivered your enemies into your hand, and then he, Abraham, gave Him a tithe of all." So, some translate this as "a tithe of all the spoils" and everything that was there. He didn't claim the spoils. He didn't claim these things from those other individuals, so he didn't tithe on something that was theirs.

He had an understanding here about tithing, and it's basically about this relationship. He said he had, basically, had put his hand up toward God. In other words, this is something that he, in essence, promised to God. It's about a relationship with God, a desire to give Him a tithe of everything that he had, a practice that he obviously also had as a part of his life, but it's interjected here because of the strength of what had taken place now, making it clear that this was of his, not of all the other kings and so forth, but this was of Abram.

Genesis 15:1, where I started, **After these things the word of the Eternal came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be fearful, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be exceedingly great.** So again, this relationship that had started long before at the point in time where there were things he understood about God, there were things he desired about God that he had to have learned from Noah. Noah was dead. God then came to him, because the timing is right there at that point, God came to him and told him to remove from all of his people and to go to a different land. Him and Lot travelled there.

And if you remember going there what he determined, what he decided, he let Lot make the choice first of the area he was going to be, and it appeared to be, by all rights, the better land. Abraham let him do that. God was blessing Abram no matter where he was. No matter what he was going to do, God was going to bless his hand. That's the relationship he had with

God. He saw those things taking place. When he pursued that particular group that had been taken captive and the army that had come down against them, God just reinforcing here, “I am with you, and it is God who has delivered them into your hand,” so He’s strengthening the relationship.

It’s like us. What an incredible thing that no one can ever take from us if we’re striving to be faithful to God, to honor God in our lives. There is that which happens in your own personal experiences that you can’t convince anyone else. It’s just something you know because you see how God has worked in your life. You recognize how things have happened in your life at different moments. They’re personal to you. Sometimes we share certain things to a point, but there’s that knowing in that relationship in your heart and your mind toward God that is personal between you and God.

That’s something that God nurtures. He builds that because that’s what He wants. He wants to have a close relationship with us. So, we go through a lot of things, we pray about a lot of different things, and a lot of our prayer life is a matter of something personal in our thinking, in our mind between us and God because we learn He knows everything in our mind. He knows everything in our thinking and so we open up those things before God. He sees our motivation. He sees what’s in us and what we really want, and He works with us. What an awesome thing!

Then as we grow and mature that relationship becomes stronger and stronger, and we seek to please and honor God. Not to lie to God. That’s what this series has addressed, in part. We want to be truthful in every way in our thoughts and our thinking toward God and in our actions and other things that this brings to light.

Because tithing is one of those things that brings those things to light as to what is really in us. Our actions speak very loudly, in that respect. So, how we respond to those things, that’s why this is being brought out in this context. Tithing is a manifestation on a physical plane of something that’s inside of us. We do it not grudgingly. God makes that very clear in scripture. When something of free will is given, like in a Holy Day offering, it’s because of that relationship we have with God. It’s our determination in our life toward God that has nothing to do with tithes. It’s something separate so it’s in our thinking. God knows what’s in our thinking. He works with us accordingly and it’s a beautiful process, it really is.

So, anyway, this is a part of the story here we’re going through in his life and beginning to see and learn something very early on. Because it’s in Genesis here, the beginning as God reveals here how He’s able to have a relationship with us. We have a physical life and certain things are manifested physically by how we feel inside spiritually, if you will.

The desire to give to God, the desire to give God His 10%, it should be natural, in that sense, of something we grow in, and not something that we have regrets for. Because that, obviously, enters into people’s lives when they begin to fudge. I mean, I’ve seen so much of that in the Church. What a horrible thing to think we come to a point in our lives that we want something else, whatever it might be, car, different place to live, things that become more important to

us, and then this thinking in our minds of regretting that we have to give so much, 10%, because we can see what we might be able to do that with ourselves.

It's like, what does that reveal? It reveals the mind is going the wrong direction. It reveals the mind isn't toward God in the manner that it should be. It's something on a physical plane that reveals something spiritual inside of us. Of necessity those things have to be there in our physical lives.

Something very physical reflects something that's deep in our thinking. As I've said, there are two things that lead people, that people leave over. Sex, a wrong relationship, tithes, stealing from God. God manifests things in our life, tries us in various things to manifest what's really inside of us. Only we can decide what we want. Only each one of us can make the choices of what it is we really desire in life. If it's God, we're going to fight for it, we're going to sacrifice for it. That reveals how real this is in our thinking, in our mind and our desire for what God has placed before us. Because He offers us things that are so far beyond our ability to even comprehend, and it's a matter of a belief in those things.

Abraham, or Abram, if you will, was one who believed God. He believed what He said, and he lived his life accordingly. We're all tried in that matter. Do we believe God? Because God attributes that to us for righteousness, not because we are. Because we're not. But it's what we believe that He says that is manifested then in our actions that reveals if we're living by faith. That's what faith is all about, living what we believe.

God manifests that in different things in our life, by different trials that might come along to test us, to see what we're going to do, to see if we're going to dip into misusing or not saving 2nd tithe or dip into and use 1st tithe or whatever it might be for wrong reasons and not recognizing this is a matter of something that is a matter of a sacred relationship. It's holy before God! Awesome to understand that.

But Abram said, LORD God, what will You give me, seeing I have no children, and the heir of my house is Eliezer? Now, He just told him, in essence here, in this vision, that "Your reward will be exceedingly great." Well, he's looking at a lot of this physically, obviously. You think, here is a point in time that, really, God hasn't given a whole lot about His plan and purpose for mankind. This doesn't come until much, much later; even not until the time of Christ did a lot of these things begin to be revealed about God's greater purpose and plan for us.

Here it is, God's working with people on a physical plane but He's working with people individually spiritually. He's giving them of His spirit and there's this which is developing—I keep pointing to my heart—but in your heart, in your mind. It's this essence, this power, this life that God has given us to see what we are. Certain ones He worked with to transform their thinking, to mold and fashion them to be a part of His government, to be a part of His Kingdom when Christ returns.

So again here, very unique relationship, but this is all about a relationship. That's why this is so profound, what God is revealing and the importance of this oath, in essence, is what he made, before a promise. "I raise my arm (my hand) to God and told Him 'This is yours. This I'm going to do. It is Yours, and I respect and honor because You have given me everything.'" That's why it says, "because He is the Possessor of heaven and earth." "He owns everything. I don't. I'm blessed to have a portion here on this earth to work with for a time, whatever that time is. Look how exceedingly blessed I am by what God has given to me." He recognized that. What a beautiful attitude. One we have to ask ourselves, is that what we have in how we live our lives?

This is when Abraham is questioning here, "What good," in essence, "is a great physical reward if I don't have anyone to pass it along to? I don't have a son. I don't have children that I can pass it along to. So, what good is it to keep growing in this reward that's going to come later if it's not going to continue on?" This is his thinking. He says, "...seeing I have no children, and the heir of my house is Eliezer?"

So again here, "What good is it going to do if I have no children? He's my heir." ...of Damascus. That's where, the origin. **Then Abram said, See, You have given me no offspring; so one born in my house will be my heir!** I have no one so it's going to go to someone else who is not an heir. He already believed other things that had been told to him, but anyway, let's go on to verse 4.

Verse 4—Then behold, the word of the Eternal came to him, saying, This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir. So again, it's all about heirs, it's all about all this reward, everything that he's going to be being blessed with in life, if you will, accumulating. He's already been blessed incredibly, had all these people working for him, and I mean, he was wealthy, awesomely wealthy. This is only the beginning of his wealth. It becomes much, much greater through time here. And so, in essence here, he's talking about passing it along, building it up, passing it along.

Then He took him outside and said, Look now toward heaven. This is what is taking place here, God communicating with Abram, Abraham responding. Again, we don't know all the in's and out's of this, how it took place, but this, everything in a nutshell. **Then He (God) took him outside and said, Look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them.**

Now, we know that you can only look into a sky and if you're able to count them, which it's moving, things are moving, for perspective and you start at a certain point, you better know when to start. As soon as the sun goes down and how do you divide that as you keep counting? You can't. It's so vast. He's showing him something here, "You know you can't." But He's saying, "Look. Look at all this out there. You can't even begin to number it."

He says here, **and count the stars if you are able to number them. Then He said to him, So shall your descendants be.** Awesome! He didn't have an heir and yet God is telling him, you're going to have this. It's going to be vast, more than you can begin to count.

And he believed the Eternal. How incredible, that relationship that just kept growing and growing. It was stronger now because he had experienced so many things in his life that no one could take that from him.

That's what our lives are like. What you have as you seek to obey God and live His way of life, you build and grow in a relationship with God, no one can take that from you except yourself. That's what's happened in God's Church from the beginning of time. When a person comes to a point of making wrong choices because that relationship isn't where it needs to be, should be, and God manifests that through various things that we live physically, and so in time all that comes to the surface.

That's why right now in the Church we have come to a point, small though we are, that we become more and more refined. What is remaining more and more is stronger and stronger. God is doing this toward the end here before Christ comes to cleanse the Church from top to bottom.

Candidly, that's one of the reasons we're making another huge change in the ministry. We don't have the same kind of need. Individuals have had training and opportunities of learning various things, and now others are having those kinds of opportunities, and it's all a part of a process God has of molding and fashioning some.

I'm going to go ahead and interject something that is a little more personal with an elder that sent in an email recently. And how do I put this? He sent us an email today that to me was very moving because there are things he sees in his life and grasps in his life, God working with him, and it helps me to think about how God has worked with this Body, especially looking back and understanding what happened back in 2008, that there were people who gave up their crown.

God has revealed to us that He's working with others. Candidly, when he and some others came along, because to me he's a representation of many others, who came along at a certain point in time, that at that time we could only see that there were those who had grown to a certain point already by the time of the Apostasy whom God was going to work with to become a part of the 144,000. Then a portion of that then and different ones even through time before 2012 and in through there, and 2013 who betrayed the Church, left the Church, who turned against what they'd been given, left the ministry, some did, some were put out of the ministry, and we look at those different ones. You think, "They gave up the crown." So close! Look...!

I think about today looking at this last week's news and you think, how could anyone not see what's coming? It's like being in this car that the throttle is stuck and it's just gaining more and more speed and it's heading for a wall or for a cliff or for whatever, but it can't stop, and people are riding it. We're just moving at a very fast pace, things are so crazy out there.

Things with China, and I'll throw in North Korea because they're going to play a part of this before it's over with. But you think about a little bit of an alliance in some news that has come

out about them, because there are some that are going to be used as pawns and people aren't going to know who they are.

Anyway, everything leading up to a war, a major nuclear war. And you think, we live in insane times and people are losing their sanity. What's happening in Afghanistan now is the greatest fiasco, blunder, evil thing that's happened to this nation ever. It really is. It makes Saigon look puny in comparison.

In this day and age, to be a nation with such power, to do something of that magnitude in such a foolish manner, to leave so many behind, to not be organized in how it's being carried out, how do you describe it as except absolute insanity. There is that power and ability to deal with it, but it's not going to be used. And what are they saying? Nations are seeing clearly we're impotent. That's what we are.

So, if you have a framework of something you're already planning, what does that give to you? Boldness to carry out your plans, your purpose. You see a country who is the strongest in the world incredibly weak and puny, and unable to properly respond to things on a physical plane as they should as a great powerful nation.

All the thousands who have died needlessly? I don't know how it makes you feel, but I'm sick by that. I really am. When I saw these huge jets, cargo, powerful, big, big, and people falling off the plane way up in the air... Did any of you see that? Almost right now makes you want to cry. How could such a thing happen? To let something like that take place? It reminds me of 9/11 when people were jumping off the building just to escape what was happening there. That's the way these people were, clamoring to a jet that by all sound, sensible thinking you know you're not going to be able to stay on it by the time it lands. There's not going to be any oxygen, you're going to be cold.

Maybe they didn't know those things, I don't know. But it was just a desire to get away from something they felt would be far worse. It's better to die like that than to die at the hands of maniacs, evil, evil, sick, perverted. That kind of a mind, you think, how on earth could that kind of a mind ever, ever, ever be given an opportunity for God's way of life, because it's so gone! It's so sick! It's so evil! To do the things that it does.

I hope that we're grasping more and more that there are minds that can never be saved. There are minds that can never be worked with because they have gone so far in such perverted and distorted thinking that they can't be helped. The best thing is to sleep forever, never to be resurrected, because there is nothing but evil there that would be resurrected, nothing that can be transformed and changed because of the choices that are made.

I didn't mean to go off on that direction, but I'll tell you what, if we don't see what's happening in this world and what's coming we are most blind. And we, of all people, should not be blind. Of all times to let down, to give up, to not latch hold of what God has placed before

us, to see more clearly what God is allowing this world to come through, whew, wow, and yet it still happens.

But as I was saying, making a gigantic circle, coming back to the point of what is happening within the Church. To me, it's encouraging. It's exciting. Then to see individuals that not too many years ago I would have thought are being prepared and molded, though their lives won't be a whole lot longer, to go on into the Millennium; still have incredible opportunity.

But now I see people's lives who are being transformed and molded and fashioned right now to be part of the 144,000. To me, that is awesome, awesomely exciting to see how God is molding and fashioning different ones and working with different minds. How can I express the excitement of that, the joy of that kind of thing, of being a part of that, of seeing someone's life and different ones that are yielding to God? What you see is God in the picture because there are certain things that can't be thought, can't be expressed, can't be done without God's help, without God's spirit. So, it's a beautiful thing. Awesome!

Whether it be 144,000 or on into a new age, it's all very powerful. But to see how God is working at the very end here to mold and fashion and to finish that work of 144,000, it's awesome to be a part of that and to see what's taking place and how God does it. We see, we're experiencing things that have never been experienced on earth before by human beings. It's awesome!

Anyway, so the Church is being cleansed, we're becoming stronger. There aren't as many difficulties as there were in the past, which is a joy to me. Because problems aren't a fun thing to deal with. Disastrous things in life are not a fun thing to deal with, to see decisions and choices sometimes made that are disastrous and drama to the tenth degree. We're getting stronger, becoming stronger. Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful.

So, it says, **And he believed the Eternal**. Not "in" the Eternal. He already believed God. It was his God; he chose Him a long time ago. He's listening to Him. But it states it again, **he believed the Eternal, and He accounted it to him for righteousness**. So, that's what it said throughout scripture. We understand, the scripture makes it very clear that we're to learn from this. This is where the story begins for us to learn about being saved, being able to be able to continue on in life, and to recognize that God blesses us through forgiveness of sin, and we're not, how can we say, it's not a matter of our righteousness that we receive the blessings from God that we receive. That's all a part of it and it will be a part of our life because we believe God.

If we believe God that we're going to live by faith, if we believe Him, we're going to live that way. As we do that, that's what God attributes to us as righteousness. Though we're not, and we don't kid ourselves, though we thank God for it. What an awesome thing.

"And he believed the Eternal, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." So, what an awesome story here of something being interjected here, of showing a mind of Abraham, or of Abram at this point, not even Abraham yet, but of Abram and this relationship he was

developing with God as God was working with him and giving him opportunities to change and grow.

That's what this is about, seeing the growth and development of a relationship. This is why he responded and made the comments that he did, "I raise my hand to God," "He is the Possessor of Heaven and earth," and "I'm giving Him a tithe of all." That's what he's saying, always, always that would be there in his life, never to go by the wayside. It's just a way of thinking.

So, tithing is a part of a relationship, of recognizing here how we think toward God.

Genesis 28:1. Another unique example of Jacob, Israel, if you will. Unique occasion where tithing is mentioned again. So again, tithing is mentioned in these situations and these circumstances because, again, it's a manifestation on a physical plane of something that's done inside of us. Never begrudgingly, but thankfully, an opportunity to please God, an opportunity to honor God. That's about a relationship and building it and making it stronger.

Genesis 28:1—Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him... Isn't that amazing? Abram, Isaac, they believed God. They believe what God said was going to be given. Isaac believed what God had said to Abraham, about what was going to be given, that all that proceeds from you are going to be greater than the stars in the heaven. Now, the thing about that is, is that they didn't know very many stars, so it's far greater than, far more vast than what they could even begin to comprehend.

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. So, in essence he's making it clear he believes God and he's passing this along to him. It's going to continue on. It's something that's to be given to him because he's an heir and his heirs are going to be blessed because he believed God. These things are going to happen.

...and charged him, and said unto him, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, of the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take a wife of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. In other words, a matter of family and belief. So, a lot of times when you look at things in the Old Testament, and a lot of people have done this through time and believe that there are cleaner races or a better race of people. Then they bring race into it. This isn't about that at all. In times past because we didn't know better some of those things were believe in part by the Church, and that there were things that had to be a certain way, or whatever it might be, and ideas that people shouldn't marry out of their own race, and stupidity like that.

Because when you don't know the truth, we're still in the land of stupidity. We can only see what the truth is when God gives it to us. Then we hold on to it. But the reality is it was about gods, it was about the belief of other gods and what happens when people mix themselves of others, of other gods. They begin to compromise; they begin to let down and begin to adopt certain practices of other. That's what God warned from the very beginning of time about other peoples and why some were to be destroyed, in many cases, because of that power of influence

of something that came from a being, Satan, and God knew how he worked, but it was up to the people whether or not they obeyed God and lived by those things in order to protect themselves in a relationship with God and God alone. That's what this is about.

So, there are relatives who believe and have beliefs about God, and it's better to have that relationship than something else that begins to pull you away from. This is why he wanted this to continue on, this lineage, but in a relationship with God. Incredible.

So he said, **charged him that he should not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram**, as it says here, and I read through that. **Verse 3—So, God Almighty bless you...** What a powerful thing to so believe, to so know something that this is what's going to happen, and to have a confidence to say, "God Almighty bless you." "You do this, God Almighty will bless you because God has given us a promise."

...and make you fruitful, to be blessed like your grandfather Abram and down on the road here, **to multiply you so that you may be a multitude of people**. Because he believed God. It's going to be a multitude of people throughout the earth. Awesome! Just on a physical plane.

They didn't even grasp the spiritual part because the spiritual part is what becomes greater, and the very name that this individual is going to be given later on, Israel, to persevere, something on a spiritual plane that God's promise was in. Though God fulfilled it on a physical plane in large part (and people misuse that because that's just the nature of man), but what God was going to do in bringing people into a spiritual Israel, now, that's another matter.

God Almighty bless you, to make you fruitful, to multiply you so that you may become a multitude of people, and give unto you the blessing of Abraham, and to your seed with you. In other words, to you and to those that continue on. This is just going to continue on because God is true. God's promise is true. **...so that you may inherit the land wherein you are a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.** So, he believed these things as well, that there is this land that God has promised to us.

Look how long before they were able to even enter into that, a long time after this. Incredible! It's clear here Isaac believed God and passing along his son is following the same course.

Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, unto Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob and Esau's mother. So, Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to make him a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. So, he was going to be obedient to what his father had told him. ...and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and was going to Padan Aram.

Since Esau saw the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father, so Esau went to Ishmael, his uncle, and added unto himself of the wives which he already had. It gives their names here, **Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.**

So again here, there is this mindset here. Esau had a bit of a battle because of how he treated what God was now inspiring through Isaac to be passed on to his son, not Esau. Esau was the firstborn. Esau had the opportunity. But as they were being born one grabbed the heel of the other.

So, let's read a part of this story here now as far as what is talked about in Hebrews 12 because it's incredible the things that God has revealed in different places and different times about some of these different accounts and piecing it all together and seeing how individuals were worked with and the kind of relationship that they really had with God.

And so, it's in the context here of **[Hebrews 12:11]—Now, no chastening is seemed to be enjoyable for the present.** At the time it happens we go through trials, we go through hardships, and at that time they're hard. They're meant to be hard. They're not meant to be easy. And so, we go through various things that test us. Why? To bring to the surface what needs to be brought to the surface so we can see ourselves, so we can learn about our thinking. Because one of the hardest things for a human being to do is to see their motive, is to come to understand what leads to various action in their life. God helps us then to be able to do that, to good or to bad, whatever that might be, because this is a refining process. That's why the concept of gold or silver, if you will, silver being tried, refined, and so forth. Those things are so much of a picture of something that we can grasp.

So, in other words, **at the time it happens, but as painful, nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.** How? Because you believe God. That's what produces righteousness. Yes, how we live our life will be improved as well, and as we draw closer to God and want to please Him more and be more obedient and see ourselves and work on our selfishness and conquer, then that part of it grows within us. But that's not accounted to us for righteousness, but believing God is. That's what this is about.

...afterward it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness. So, after we go through a hardship, a trial that works in our life to bring things to the surface, how we respond to that all determines about what it is we believe that God has placed in front of us. Do we believe God? Do we live by that? Do we grasp and understand it's for a purpose, it's for a change that can take place in us? Especially in the Church to grasp and understand God can intervene any time in our life He wants. He lets us go through many things.

I think of my heart and how many times I've gone through stents being put up that go through the groin, that go up through the arteries. And you think, what an incredible thing they can go up in there and they can put this little thing in there and expand it and open up an artery so that blood can flow through again. And how many of those? Five? Seven! See, I lose track. Seven of those, four heart attacks, one time flatlining. You think of all these things you go through. Now, God could have prevented every one of those. Everything that's ever happened in your life that's been difficult to go through, God could intervene and stop.

Like that, what do you call that little space of time of three years? You could call it a vacation, but it's not really that. But God could have prevented that easily. He could have caused something to be turned around and things come out to reveal what is true and right. But He didn't do that. Why? Because we learn through it. Even a Church can learn through it and grow through it, to try and test people what do you believe? And so, that is very powerful.

Constantly we're being tried as to what is in us, what do we really believe? Do we believe God? Do we believe the things He's given to us? Do we believe the truth that He's given to us, or do we begin at some point to question certain things because whatever that reason is in our thinking? Well, it's an awesome process. But if we choose to hold on to that which God has revealed to us and we know how that happens God accounts that to us as righteousness. What an awesome thing.

...afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Because once you learn something, once you go through a trial and you do it the right way in the sense of what you're learning from it and your attitude toward God, it says it's a "peaceable fruit." There's a peace that enters in, that's in your life and in your thinking that is awesome, awesome indeed.

Therefore, it says, strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet. I love this physical example of something here that says, you know, don't go into whatever it might be weak, in a weak state, not strong, but hold to the path that God has given to you. As it says here, "make straight paths for your feet." The more you strive to do things the way God says to do, the more we're going to be blessed, the stronger we're going to be.

...so that which is lame may not be, as it says here, but rather be healed. So, in other words, if something isn't right, if it's lame, if it continues in that way, if we're not enthusiastically, energetically, with strength, addressing things in our life because we believe God, if we're letting down in that and we have doubts about certain things, then we're lame. He's using a physical example of something here that's to be applied to us spiritually. "Don't be lame!" We have a choice of whether or not we're lame. Do we have a confidence and a boldness to charge into something?

I don't want to use that example, because it's going to be used at the Feast, but there are some awesome examples in scripture where individuals charge into a matter because they believe God. And Abram believed God. He charged into a matter to bring back everyone because He believed in God's way and that God would bless him and protect him. You see all these different examples in scripture.

David did the things that he did. Do you think a bear, a lion, a willingness to fight something because there are things you believed about God? Incredible! Not weak at all, because if you're weak, you're going to be food.

...but rather be healed. Pursue peace... So, it's saying here desire these things, desire to grow. It's not that we want a whole lot of trials and troubles, but it's just a part of life, and when we do, we look to God and look to God to strengthen us. So, the more you go through, candidly, the more you can be transformed, made stronger, truly, absolutely.

The strength I have to this day is because of everything I've gone through in the past that's brought me to this point in time. It gives you confidence, a boldness that you know exactly what's going to happen in the future. You know where you're going. There is no thought of turning, there is no thought of lying to God. You would have to be absolutely insane! But yet we do that as human beings sometimes.

But that kind of boldness and strength comes through time that God gives to us if we keep making the right choices as we go through these trials, these hardships. So, pursue peace, go through those things with your head up high understanding that this is an opportunity for growth, of development. But sometimes we just see it as a barrier to something, of holding us down and holding us back. Not true at all!

You know, if God's in our life the things that happen to us He allows for a purpose. He doesn't prevent them. It's His opportunity to mold us, to help fashion us even more. It wasn't meant to be easy. Well, you have to have the process. That's the point. You have to have the process. It has to be at work in your life.

...but rather let it be healed. Pursue peace with all, and holiness. Because that's God's way of life, to strive to peace. You can't control others. You shouldn't even try to control others. Yet we get caught up in that in our lives oftentimes, we want to control other people's lives. Let God do His work!

That's why so often within the Church even, within the ministry I've let people know, "Don't insert yourself in various things. Let it go its course." That's why sometimes people have been impatient with me—years back, thinking about different ones in the ministry who have been impatient with me about handling or dealing with various matters—because they think I should do it right now when I have certain knowledge. And it's like, yeah, but I have other knowledge and I have other things that God has given to me. I don't live by what someone brings to me, I strive to live by what God leads me in, and then when the time is there gone through this enough to know, then I know this is the time to address it. He lets me know. How can an individual tell about those things in life? It's not a matter of us trying to convince others, it's just a matter if you know you know and you live by that.

This is a part of that process, and we all have to go through that, this molding and fashioning. "Pursue peace with all." We're blessed to be able to do that. God will help us to go through that process. Not to try to change others, but to change self. "What can I learn from this?"

Just like the one who was throwing rocks at king David and his captain said, "Shall I cut off his head," basically, is what it amounted to. "Shall I kill him right here?" because to do something

like that was an atrocious thing as far as a physical world was concerned. David said, “No. There may be something I have to see here, that I have to learn from that God is telling me.” What an attitude! There is something here that you may be able to learn that God is allowing this to happen. Because God could have prevented that. So, is there something I can learn? Absolutely. Always.

...and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. And carefully watching unless anyone fall short of the grace of God. God just wants to continue to give to us. God wanted to bless Abram. God wanted to bless Isaac. On and on it goes. God wanted to give blessings. The ability to receive those within the context of Him working with them depended upon their response to Him. So it is in our spiritual life. So many of those things are a part of something physical that manifest that which is spiritual and how we address it.

And carefully watching unless anyone fall short of the grace of God. So, we have to be on guard, carefully watching. Whenever I see that word “watch” there’s only one thing that pops in my mind, being on guard, a sentry at a post. Because of enemies out there you have to be alert. We went through a period of time, Laodicea, when we were not alert, we were not watchful, we were not on guard like we should have been.

...and carefully watching unless anyone fall short of the grace of God, unless any root of bitterness... What a horrible thing. I’ve seen this over and over in God’s Church, that when the thinking begins to go in a wrong way where God isn’t seen properly and God working in our life isn’t seen properly that maybe even giving toward God begins to be seen with a bitterness. But generally it’s within relationships within the Church and finding fault with others in the Church, and especially finding fault within the ministry and whoever God is working with to lead in that ministry. That’s the way it’s always been.

After a while they have to find something that they can say is wrong to justify what they’re saying and what they want to do. This is our history. Then a root of bitterness where the heart begins to turn worse and worse toward individuals. That’s why there is so much betrayal. When these things happen, absolute betrayal, in God’s Church. When people get to this point they will turn, they will say things, they will do things, they will make up things, they will do all kinds of things because the bitterness is so great, the hatred becomes so great.

That’s why I marvel to this day there are things out there that people have written, still writing about Herbert Armstrong because they hated him so much they’re willing to believe and latch on to anything that gives them credibility. Look how long ago he died. For that to still be there? They hated something so much. They hated God. They hated God’s way of life. That’s the bottom line. But they have to find something physical to justify their thinking.

...lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble and thereby they become defiled. ... many become defiled. So, we’ve all experienced in one way or another, heard of at least if we haven’t experienced it personally, how this kind of thing can spread throughout a body. That’s been everything I’ve seen since I’ve been in God’s Church, since 1969. What happened in ’72,

what happened in '74 through '75 and what happened a little bit later then when Herbert Armstrong began to have the problems health wise that he did and others began to try to press forward, and confusion and things that weren't right began to come out at times. What a history we've had, all a part of molding and fashioning us.

Unless there be any fornicator, immoral person is what it's talking about here because God reveals this as mixing. If you mix something with His way that isn't right you're trying to force something and you're wanting to believe something that isn't right, you're going to establish your own righteousness. That's what people do because they have to be justified.

...or unhallowed person... in other words, not set apart to be worked with by God. A person can go that far away from what is true that after a while they've cut themselves off for so long that they begin to cause harm and damage within the Body and begin to pull down the Body, begin to pull down others in conversation. It's hard for people to grasp sometimes what's happening when they allow that.

That's why it's so important when it says go to a brother alone. Sometimes people don't understand that properly, and still don't even after the sermon, but learning it, of what that means, that when something happens then and there, not a month later, not a year later, not two years later, not ten years later, but right then and there at that time to go to a brother alone, not with a group of people looking over here and whatever and express yourself, and if you're wrong be willing to accept that because you don't always know the whole story of things that take place, but to have done your part. Especially if it's something that's obviously wrong and something that has obviously been said that's very wrong, and maybe in a group of people about someone.

Say it was about me and you know that: "You have the audacity to say...?" I would respond that way, "You're talking that way in front of others in God's Church?" That's talking to your brother right then and there. It doesn't mean alone. Because the group that's there heard the same thing and that's alone with them, not others. You're not saying, "Hey! Come over and hear this," you know, from different ones You're doing it alone with that group because they all heard the same thing. And they should be doing the same thing you do to stand up for what is true.

If it's something that is a contrary to doctrine...? But sometimes we just let it go. I'm guilty of that. I've done those kinds of things. There are times you have to measure certain things. Is it worth intervening and saying something at this point or not? Some things you have to weigh out and so forth, is this causing harm to someone else? Anyway, we grow in that, and it's something you'll always grow in.

...Unless there be any fornicator, immoral person, **or unhallowed person**, in other words, God's spirit is not working in them, **like Esau**, so, someone who is not setting things apart. Others did. They saw God in the picture. They wanted God to be in the picture. But Esau, it's bringing up this example of what he did, **who for one morsel of food sold his birthright**. It's

showing here how puny some things can be in our life sometimes that we will do as human beings to give up everything.

That's something I really marvel at sometimes, of thinking, how can we do such a thing? To turn away from everything that God has placed before us, the calling God has given to us, the truth that God has given to us. Sold their birthright. People to give up a crown. An opportunity and we throw it away. That blows my mind, it really does. It's because we don't believe God. Somewhere along the line we ceased believing God. That's what it boils down to.

For you know that afterward, when he wanted the blessing of the inheritance, he was rejected. It wasn't given to him. It was given to his brother. He was rejected. I think of all those. "Many have been called, few chosen." Rejected. It's what it is. It's a matter of being rejected. God can't use that. God can't work with that. God can't transform and mold and fashion that at this time. Whether later? That depends on the individuals and what they've done.

So again here, **For you know that afterward, when he wanted the blessing of the inheritance, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.** And some people look at this, have read this in times past and like, why wasn't he forgiven? Why was he still looked upon in this way? You know, there are people that can do things and afterwards be sorrowful about something because, well, they wanted something, but they want it their way.

I've known of people who want to continue to have fellowship, they're on the outside, they've been told, "You've been disfellowshipped," but the still want to have something and so, they cry about it. They become upset about it because "I'm not being treated the same way," or "I've been told I'm not supposed to do that," or "They've been told...they've been told and they're just listening to that Church, to that person, and they won't have anything to do with me because of them!" Think, no, it's because of God. It's because of what God says about not living right. If you aren't then you're not a part of it. But people can go through this and feel bad and want something, but not want it for the right reasons. Sad.

So, the desire is that everyone in time have opportunity. Many who have been part of the Church will have that opportunity but not all because of what we went through during the Apostasy. There are some minds that are gone, can't be worked with.

Verse 18—For you have not come to the mountain, in essence, to be touched and that burned with fire. In other words, couldn't be touched. It was burning with fire. ...and to **blackness, darkness and,** as the word is, it says "**tempest,**" but **whirlwinds** is the actual word here. So, whatever it was, this spiraling fire and things that they saw, an incredibly fearful sight when they were there, and God was manifesting something physical to show His great power.

Because that's all they could grasp. They were being worked with on a physical plane, so they saw something that was scary, you know, but they'd never seen anything like this. The looks and the sound and everything else that was there, it was a terrifying experience.

...and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them. In other words, they didn't want to hear those words, but it shows as well it was a matter that not just because of the power there. It was the words that were actually spoken that they didn't want either.

So, if you look at the commandments that were going to be given to them or that were given to them, they didn't want that either. But they didn't want this. They wanted the blessings, they wanted the help, they wanted the favor, they wanted to go to a promised land, they wanted to get away from Egypt, they wanted to have food in the wilderness, they wanted this, they wanted that, and they complained, and they murmured, and they griped until they got, in some cases, things they wanted because God had heard enough of them, so He gave them all that, flying birds and so forth. People were ripping them apart and eating them right there on the spot rather than cooking them and the like.

So, it says **(For they could not endure what was commanded.)** See, that's the bottom line. It wasn't just that, it was what's in the heart and mind of carnal physical people, and they definitely couldn't deal with this. It's showing a spirit and an attitude here that we all have to be careful of. **(And even if a beast so much as touched the mountain, it was stoned or shot with an arrow.)** So, it was to be destroyed. They were told not to go close to it, there is a certain distance, and that was it. They didn't want to anyway, but they had to be there because they were told to be there because of the fearful sight.

(So terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I was exceedingly fearful and trembled.) So, even Moses who had this relationship that he's building with God, he saw this. For him to have this kind of response you know that it had to be a terrifying sight on a physical plane. We can't grasp that.

Verse 22—But you have come to Mount Zion... So, that's what's to be impressed upon our minds. Look what God has placed before us, something so much greater than something that was on a physical plane in a relationship with God, before God Almighty; Mount Zion because it's about His Family, of what He's placed before us that's going to become so great.

You have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn registered (recorded) in heaven. So, he's talking about this is what is before you. These have gone through this, those, in this part, that have been worked with as 144,000, and those who are going to continue to be added to it. This is where we are in time. Look where God has brought it. And this is clear back then.

We know much more about that. They didn't understand this was about 144,000. They knew there were tens of thousands that were a part of this. That's all that had been given to them at this point. But to think, here we are, we grasp the number, and we know that we're almost there. Awesome!

And so, it's telling us this, "Look what you have before you." So, even at the end-time here to have people who still let down, who leave, who lie to God. God's going to take care of that. We should know that with all of our being. So, I've been watching this intensify since 2012, more and more and more. It should be very obvious to all of us that God is cleansing His temple. We're almost there. Incredible!

...before God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Joshua the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of the sprinkling that speaks of better things than of Abel. So again, going all the way back and bringing all the way forward. He's saying, "Look what God has placed before us. Look what we have before us."

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. Yet people still go through this. So, we're going through this series on tithing and it's been over ten years now, 2010, when things of tithing were covered. And here we are, you know, seeing those kinds of things that have happened in times past still happening. That's why it's mindboggling to think that individuals would not give to God, would not tithe to God. Because this reflects then, a spirit in the mind that is so foreign, so wrong.

Anyway, continuing on Genesis 28. I don't think we're going to have time to finish this part. We'll come back and finish part of that story as it follows through here together because I need to interject something here in the sermon today. So, we'll stop in this part of the story because there is more to the story in Genesis that we need to cover that pertains to these blessings and this relationship with God because it's all about a relationship with God and building upon that.

Anyway, I want to interject some parts here now because we don't have enough time to go through this section here in Genesis. Some questions have come up, they keep coming up about tithing, and I'm probably not going to get different ones in that I need to right now, 1st tithe, 2nd tithe. And again, I hope everybody is realizing, people, about retirement and so forth and you're not to tithe on any of those things. Anything that comes from the government, you're not to tithe on it, period.

That is your choice if you give a Holy Day offering, and so, questions come up about Holy Day offerings. Every year people have to choose what it is they give. There is no set amount. I remember times in the Church where, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles, where ministers would get up and it became a competition between Feast sites because they would actually share what the average amount given at that particular Feast site was. And so, they would spend a long time getting up and trying to whoop people up to give more.

“If you have yours prepared,” basically, it was being said, which some did, “can you do more?” What about all the change in your pocket? What about the bills you might have right now? Are you able to give that to God? You think, that’s like the protestant world, you know? “We passed the basket around once. Let’s do it twice!” Anyway, we’re not to be like that as God’s people.

I shouldn’t do this but I’m going to. Dave, when he told that joke that time a long time ago about this church. Anyway, there is this old story about, I’m probably going to mess this up and I shouldn’t have started it even because I am not good at joke telling. Give me one second here to think about this.

It had to do with a minister talking to a congregation and trying to whip them up about what they were going to do, and he’s talking about how, “This church needs to walk. We need to get up and walk!” And individuals, “Yeah, we need to walk!” And he said, “This church needs to run. We need to get up and run!” “Yes, this church needs to run!” Then he said, “This church needs money to run!” And they said, “This church needs to walk!” The people responded.

Anyway, so when it came down to the money part it was like, okay, we’re happy with walking. Anyway, sorry. But it’s amazing how as human beings we’re tied into some of those things.

This is a personal thing between an individual and God. It’s what you set aside according to your blessings, and if you’ve had a horrible year and you look at various things, of trials you’ve gone through, and you can’t afford certain things, they didn’t come that year... God will bless us. There are times that God continues to bless us. We see those things in our life that happen. So often we look back and think about we don’t even know how we made it.

I remember when we used to be in 3rd tithe year and I wrote different things down, of all the things that came along at times when we thought you can’t put this on paper, and how that things just kept working. The experiences you have sometimes. Then finally we realized that still God blessed us through even though we didn’t have to at that time. But we still did until it was made official, and that was done through God’s apostle.

So anyway, so now we have things of 1st tithe and 2nd tithe and we’re learning how to better administer those things. We recognized, hopefully and prayerfully everyone, that 2nd tithe is for the Feast, going to and from the Feast. I’ve talked enough about those.

Holy Day offerings, the same sort of thing. I’m not going to give any guideline as to amounts. Those are personal things. I will say that as a whole, that those things are to be done in three seasons of the year. We understand that. We recognize then that during the High Days in the springtime we have (that’s in the north; the south is opposite), so, we have the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread and the Last Day of Unleavened Bread where offerings are given to God. Then we have Pentecost. That’s the second season. It’s separated from the others in time. Then we have the fall Holy Days.

And so, what the custom basically has been within the Church is that you’re to do it on those Holy Days, on those High Days because we have the ability. Sometimes we have people putting

down different things and sending them in, and that's fine. Some we talked about the other day, about how some of this, some individuals maybe because they don't know really what they have in a whole year determined at a certain point what to give. Well, we've had so many different situations. Everybody is in a different kind of situation in life, and not everybody, but sometimes there's exceptions of how things work.

We have some individuals because of how their finances are, they make a decision toward the beginning of the year that this is how much they want to give to God, and they want to give a certain amount on these different Holy Days because they look back over the previous year and they see what they have to work with, and they don't know what they have to work with between now and the next year.

So, ever what your custom is, whatever your relationship with God is, it needs to be spelled out though the different Holy Days, how much of that that you're giving for those Holy Days. How you do it because of your set up, because of how, what your work might be.

I think of farmers and ranchers and stuff. Had a bit of that conversation yesterday. You know, they don't know what they have until the end of the year because of all that's involved. Until certain things are sold or whatever it might be, and then you take into consideration, so once the taxes are done, finally a person is able to work those things together and know what those are. Because it's not like a corporation that has a certain amount going in every month and going out every month and they can bank on that and they know what's there. Everybody's situation, in that respect then, in that can be different, so you have to deal with that according to your tithes, and sometimes to your Holy Day offerings.

But we are commanded to send in Holy Day offerings, and we need to specify what days those are for, not just the three seasons of the year. This is for this day. This is for that day. As a whole, they need to be upfront at that time. In other words, Unleavened Bread should be done just before or during that period. Not two months later, not three months later, but at that time. It should be chosen in the mind already what that's going to be and have been sent in.

That's why I say we don't go through and look for those things in people's lives. But again, a pattern that generally does follow is when we're folding those papers and maybe one line of something for the whole year in a Holy Day offering or no Holy Day offering at all. Something's wrong. And so, that naturally causes concern.

So, if there is a pattern to that kind of thing and we're lying to God, I will deal with it. I will not hesitate. I've got a couple right now I've got to deal with when I get back, that over the years here that record has not been what it should be. When those papers are folded up it isn't what it should be. I know they're not living on what they say they have there. They're not on government assistance so something is wrong.

I have a responsibility to address those things. I don't like doing that, but I have to do it. It's not a pleasant thing, in other words.

So again here, please look at your own life, please make sure that you specify Holy Days, that you're giving a certain amount. I don't care whether it's a dollar bill or fifty cents, but you've done it because God says to do it at that time. And so, we put that amount in, send it in, whatever it might be. It isn't the amount, it's about our relationship with God.

So again here, I could have more things to say here about some of these things and I just don't know how much to go into it. So, there is no point I don't think in hitting anymore unless you can think of some? Because I thought I had some more that I wanted to say about Holy Day offerings. (You're not helping me at all today.)

Some worry about how they've given certain things and maybe because of certain things in their life, maybe age or whatever it might be, if our heart is right before God we're going to be doing the things we can do to the best of our ability. That's obvious in how we live our life. So, sometimes people fret over various things because they worry that, "Well, I don't want you to think..."

We're not looking. Please, get that out of your minds. We're not looking, we're not investigating. The only time that I might go in and look at something is when I know that someone is doing something else in their life that is sin and they're doing something way off base and it's come to light, and I need to address it. Generally, I can look at that and see something else that's been happening too. That generally goes hand-in-hand. We let down in one area, we start letting down in many areas of our life. That's a hard thing but it gives me something with which I must work with and have to work with then to bring something to the surface to say, "This can't be in God's Church. Why play games with God?"

So anyway, don't like going into those things. It's some of the worst part of my job. But I have to do what I have to do, and God wants the Body cleansed, God wants it clean, and I have a particular responsibility to that. Just like you do at your house, and you clean up and you have personal responsibility to keep things clean.

With that, we'll stop for the day and continue on. I'm not sure if I'll do it next Sabbath here because I haven't even look at it. We've got, or we have a certain amount of time now before the Holy Days, before the Feast is on us. Just a few weeks, Feast of Trumpets is going to be here. I have a certain amount of time to give certain instruction, guidance, and direction, so I may have to plug in a different sermon here at some point about preparation for the Feast, about going to the Feast, and things that people need to be on guard about and all that kind of thing that we need to do before this Feast so we can have a better Feast. So, I have to get that kind of a sermon in before the Feast. So, anyway, appreciate your continued prayers.

I do want to add one more thing, already in Chapter 6. Chapter 5 has been sent off. Hint, hint, Chapter 4 is out there...being worked on, I hope, even as of today. So, this is going through quite fast so this time that I have between being in Virginia and here, blessed to get all of Chapter 5 done, working in Chapter 6. Some things are parts out of other chapters, and they're organized in a totally different way though. The book has a different thrust to it than normal.

To me that's exciting, to see how all this is coming together. So, I'd appreciate your continued prayers in that as well as continued sermons before the Feast.

With that, we'll continue in something next Sabbath.